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**Written Testimony in SUPPORT of- House Joint Resolution concerning -
United States Constitution – Amendments Convention – Limitations on
Federal Power**

Rules and Executive Nominations

Dear Committee Chair, Delegate Anne Healey, and Committee Members,

My name is Dr. Nichole Weakley, I am a behavior analyst, professor, Marine Corps spouse, and homeschooling mom of four.

My maiden name is Jaskiw, which is an anglicized version of Ясків and I am part of the first full generation of my family born here in the United States. My grandparents immigrated from the Ukraine following World War II, the execution of their families, and devastation of their homeland. Their childhoods played against the backdrop of the Nazi rise across Europe –their bodies remnants of the pain inflicted by evil men. As a child, I could trace the scars from shrapnel across her arm, my grandfather died at 90 with bomb fragments still embedded in his body.

In my testimony a year ago, I voiced my concerns for the ever-growing hand of federal government, discussing the issues that forced my family to flee to the US, and lauded my husband’s dedication, as a Marine, to freedom.

I stand here today wishing my testimony could be that simple again. But the truth is over the last year, there has not been a single part of my life that hasn’t been directly impacted by the whims of the White House – and quite frankly? I’m exhausted, absolutely terrified, and begging you to help us fix it.

Professionally, I have degrees in behavioral neuroscience and school psychology, and have sought additional training in child law and education policy. Over the last 15 years I’ve worked with children across home, school, and clinic settings with leading non-profits and universities in our Nation. As a scientist-practitioner who cares deeply about education polices – I believe that HJ6 is a long-standing solution to the heart of the issue.

Children, particularly those in marginalized populations have often been described as the “canaries in a coal mine” because negative outcomes will often show with them, first – watching these populations should allow for us to quickly adjust policies.

I have never before experienced the despondency that I am seeing in the field of mental health and education. The top-down policies that have come from Washington for generations create a cascade of secondary and tertiary effects that impact – without fail – those most at risk. This has never been more evident than during the past two years where education and intervention

services have been desecrated while referrals for mental health issues are through the roof – we are unable to adequately staff, hours cannot be met, and something as simple as “masking” creates additional hurdles for kiddos who are already struggling with making social and communicative connections. I am now fielding concerns of suicidal ideation in children as young as 8. The CDC data for 2020 indicates that suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death in ages 9-14. Children between the ages of 9 and 19 were 18xs more likely to die from suicide than from COVID, yet our recent child health and education policies are myopic and void of data-based decision making.

Yet, it doesn't seem to matter how loud we ring the alarm – questions are silenced, parents and schools are pitted against each other, and politicians are interested in little more than sound bites. Someday we will have to answer for what we've allowed to happen to our Nation's children over the last two years, and how we've allowed the most marginalized to suffer needlessly because of party-line politics.

On the personal side of things, I can state plainly, without hyperbole, that this last year has been an absolute mess. Things I hold most precious – my faith and my family - have been directly assaulted. Our faith has been tested and questioned, our church body constrained, religious waivers for vaccine mandates – a Constitutionally protected right – have been completely discarded. In Afghanistan we left allies left behind, lost friends, and I watched in real time spouses and veterans moving hell and earth to do what Biden's State Department refused to do.

And right now - I have not one, but two kid brothers in line for the newest war. One spent years of his life in Afghanistan already, a Green Beret, the other following in his footsteps. I can tell you one thing for certain, when my grandparents dreamed of us visiting their homeland, it wasn't like this. And now, at the dawn of a new war, my greatest fears seem to be coming to fruition as our loved ones in the Ukraine are under attack and the American military prepares for decisions coming from Washington.

Additionally, my husband faces the potential of discharge after nearly 17 years of exemplary service and skill that has landed him among the most advanced aviators across the military – because he is refusing to abandon his faith, his oath to the Constitution, and his duty to question unlawful orders. It is the *duty* of military members to question unlawful orders. This is trained into every Marine officer while they are at TBS, each member of the military is required to hold the others accountable to their oath. Failure to do so can have catastrophic results – as it did with Nazi soldiers. We are seeing this play out across the Ukraine currently with the Russian military executing an invasion that is largely unsupported outside of Putin's echo chamber, bringing us dangerously close to the next world war.

I joined this bipartisan effort to call for a Convention of States because I believe it is our duty as Americans to hold fast the reins on government. History has shown us time and again that when left unchecked – governments grow, and the larger and more powerful the Federal government, the heightened risk for disastrous results. These were the words that I said last year, and they ring truer today.

We also know that focused, individualized interventions lead to the greatest results for clients – and I would argue the same goes for politics. Strong relationships between the elected and their constituents leads to greater results for people and communities. It's time we bring governing back to you here at the state.

Please help us here in Maryland and across the United States. Be the heroes of your constituents and let our voices be heard by passing HJ6 out of this committee and to the House floor for a free and full debate of these issues for your constituents so Maryland can be one of the leaders moving to save our country's freedoms.

Thank you,

Dr. Nichole M (Jaskiw) Weakley